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REGISTRATION OF CAUSES OF DEATH.

Mr. John B. Martin, President of the Royal Statistical Society, England, in his annual address, delivered November 17, 1896, describes the method followed in Switzerland by the Federal Statistical Bureau, in order to secure accurate returns of the causes of death from the medical profession. It appears that —

In certain cantons the doctors took refuge behind the veil of professional secrecy and refused to state the cause of death. The registrar had, therefore, to be content with the declaration and verification of death which satisfied the schedule, and left the cause of death to be declared by the relations. It happened also that the doctor in attendance gave as the cause of death a secondary complaint, as, for instance, pneumonia, when this disease was the consequence of scarlet fever or nephritis, when the primary cause was scarlatina. In order to obviate these inconveniences the Statistical Bureau, in accord with the medical profession, instituted a new certificate of death. As soon as a death is declared to the civil authorities the officer fills up the first part of the new schedule and sends it with an envelope to the doctor who has signed the open declaration. The doctor, after having assured himself of the identity of the individual, tears off the counterfoil which bears the name of the deceased, and has only to answer questions in the second part of the schedule—that is to say, to indicate primary and secondary, or immediate cause of death, as well as all information useful for statistical purposes. Having done this he returns the card to the registrar, who is not at liberty to open the envelope, but must satisfy himself that the card is therein contained. Later on the sealed envelopes are sent to the officials of the Statistical Bureau, by whom they are sorted and arranged. In this way medical confidence is safeguarded and exact returns are obtained. In this manner the series of the death returns have attained a high degree of accuracy, since they are based on confidential information given by doctors who are only actuated by the interests of medical and sanitary science.

NOTES.

Eighth Report on the Custody and Condition of the Public Records of Parishes, Towns, and Counties of Massachusetts. Robert T. Swan, Commissioner. Boston, 1896. Pp. 42.

The history of the bill relating to the returning and recording of births, marriages, and deaths is again referred to, and a review is made of the agitation and legislation upon this subject in Massachu-

setts since 1841. The anomalies and ambiguities of the present returns are pointed out, and the hope is expressed that the defects and omissions will be removed by the passage of the bill which is at present before the General Court.

In the *Third Annual Report of the Massachusetts Highway Commission, 1896*, p. 12, are given tables showing the valuation of towns and cities throughout the State, with the amounts appropriated for the repair and construction of roads and bridges. These statistics are given in accordance with a law which was passed by the Legislature May 31, 1895. It appears that the total amount appropriated in the cities was \$4,917,109, and in the counties \$1,469,609.

Sixty-Sixth Annual Report of the Inspectors of the State Penitentiary for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Philadelphia, 1895. Pp. 143.

This report, which has been previously referred to in these *Publications* as one of the most valuable for the student of applied sociology, follows its predecessors in form. Detailed criminal histories are given of 119 prisoners, received during 1895, who had served one or more previous terms in the Eastern Penitentiary. Detailed statements are also given with regard to 52 persons who also had relatives in prison. A summarized table is given of the prison population from 1829 to 1895, in which are statistics of health, habits, social relations, etc.

Twenty-Third Annual Report of the State Charities Aid Association of New York. December 1, 1895. New York, 1895. Pp. 138.

A special report is given on the advisability of separating the department of public charities and corrections of New York city. February 1, 1895, this department had in its charge 18,552 persons, including inmates, officers, and employees. An error is made by the Board in saying that this means that more than a one-hundredth part of all the inhabitants of the city are wards or employees of this department. The calculator probably meant a one-thousandth part. The number of children in institutions in New York State is constantly increasing. In 1884 it was 33,558, as compared with 27,537 in 1890. The number placed in families is not increasing. In 1894 the number so placed was only 1370. There is a steady and strong growth of the institutional population in the city of New York.

The New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor has begun the bulletin entitled *A. I. C. P. Notes*. No. 1 of Vol. I, December, 1895, is devoted to the cultivation of vacant city lots by the unemployed. On page 22 is a comparative table of various experiments under the following headings: Number of Acres; Number of Employed; Cost; Crops; Time; Management; and Remarks.

In the Minnesota *Bulletin of Corrections and Charities* for December, 1895, page 42, is a brief statement of a pauper enumeration of June, 1895, for that State. The results of this enumeration are not regarded as altogether reassuring. While the number of paupers,—8565 in June, 1895,—was considerably less than in December, 1894, when it was 11,354, it is an increase of nearly 1000 over the enumeration of June, 1894. There is reason to fear that the hard times are to mark a permanent advance of paupers and pauperism in the population. "It is much easier to make paupers than to unmake them." "While the ratio of pauperism in the rural counties has increased 14 per cent during the past five years, the ratio in the urban district has increased 100 per cent. The ratio of pauperism in the urban counties is nearly double that in the rural counties."

Ninth Annual Report of the General Superintendent of Prisons in Massachusetts Concerning Prison Labor. December, 1895. Pp. 63.

A detailed account is given of the various industries carried on in the prisons and houses of correction of the State. The number engaged in productive industries in the State Prison was 513; in the Reformatory Prison for Women, 157; in the Reformatory for Men, 581; in the houses of correction, an average number of 2480.

In the *Bulletin Statistic General* for Roumania, Third Year, No. 3, 1895, is a detailed descriptive and statistical article on divorce statistics from 1864 to 1893, with an introduction by C. Crupenski, the Director-General.

The journal *Locomotive* has kept a record of the boiler explosions in the United States during the year 1895, and makes a return of 355 accidents, killing 374 persons and injuring 519. According to the same record the number of explosions for 1894 was 361; for 1893, 316; for 1892, 269.

The *Report of the Commissioner of Patents to Congress for 1894* showed that there were 36,987 applications for patents, and 20,803 granted. More patents are granted in Connecticut in proportion to the population than any other state, there being one to every 993 inhabitants. In South Carolina the rate is one to 25,581. The total expenditures of the office were \$1,100,047; the receipts over expenditures, \$87,392.

Report of the Attorney-General of Massachusetts for the Year Ending January 15, 1896. Boston, 1896.

During the year there were nine indictments for murder, particulars of which are given in this report.

The *K. K. Statistische Central-Commission* has published in connection with the *Statistische Monatschrift* an index for the first 21 volumes, from 1875 to 1895, prepared by Dr. W. Schiff.

Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Agriculture, Labor, and Industry of Montana for the Year Ended November 30, 1896. Helena, 1896. Pp. 405.

The state census previously ordered for 1895 has not been taken, as no appropriation was made. A statistical table is given of the work of the free employment office which has been recently established, and the experience from April 1 to December 31, 1895, is here tabulated. It appears that of the 476 male applicants positions were secured for 167. The work of the bureau is regarded as successful, although only one office has been established, namely, at Helena.

Part II is a general statistical summary on education, crime, divorce, insanity, and indebtedness. Part III is devoted to fruit growing, Part V to wages, Part VI to manual production, Part VII to agriculture, Part VIII to miscellaneous statistics. The appendix contains laws of special interest to wage-earners.

Number 6, December 18, 1895, of the *Publications of the Michigan Political Science Association* (Secretary, Henry C. Adams, Ann Arbor) is entirely devoted to **city government**, there being five articles on municipal government in **Grand Rapids**, Kalamazoo, Jackson, Saginaw, and Detroit. There is some statistical material bearing upon cost of administration in **various departments**.